

MAY-JUNE

ADVANCED IRON





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Iron Fan, 10341 Leola Court #1, Cupertino, CA 95014.

This issue will be our first in-depth look at armored characters in other universes. This time around, it's BRASS (© and TM Aegis Entertainment, Inc.) from Wildstorm Productions. Mike Kalibabky's Stark Remarks Extra "Introducing Brass" has all the details. I think an expanded view of the industry's armored characters puts things in perspective. Compare and contrast what you see. And always remember to WRITE and tell 'em what you think is good and what's bad. We'll keep providing this info to you as long as we keep getting it. Malibu comics has sent us some excellent PROTOTYPE artwork, but hasn't provided us with any written background material. If nothing else, we'll show you some of the art next issue.

SIGHTINGS

FORCE WORKS

Hopefully you've all seen the first issue of FORCE WORKS. It looks like this new team will be dealing with threats on a whole different level than any of its members have seen individually. I'm waiting to see how the plot develops, but I can tell right now that the art gets an A. As for the cover: I don't think it was worth wait. I know that covers can help sell books (or we wouldn't have platinum-chromium pan-dimensional multi-spectrum covers for every other title), but delays can help kill interest. A lot of us are more interested in what's inside anyway.

IRON MAN ANNUAL #15

If you haven't checked out the IRON MAN ANNUAL, do so now! It contains two stories and a special media section. Long time fans will be pleased to see Mark Bright's pencils in the second of the two stories, which is a lead in to issue #307. Len and Mark tell a story that pits IM against quite a number of old foes (and they're all drawn the Bright way!) But I think I enjoyed Len's media section the most. It included a "Playmates" interview with Stark and several other articles. Read the article "Super Hero Spokesmen All The Rage" for a chiding look at the other armored characters out there.

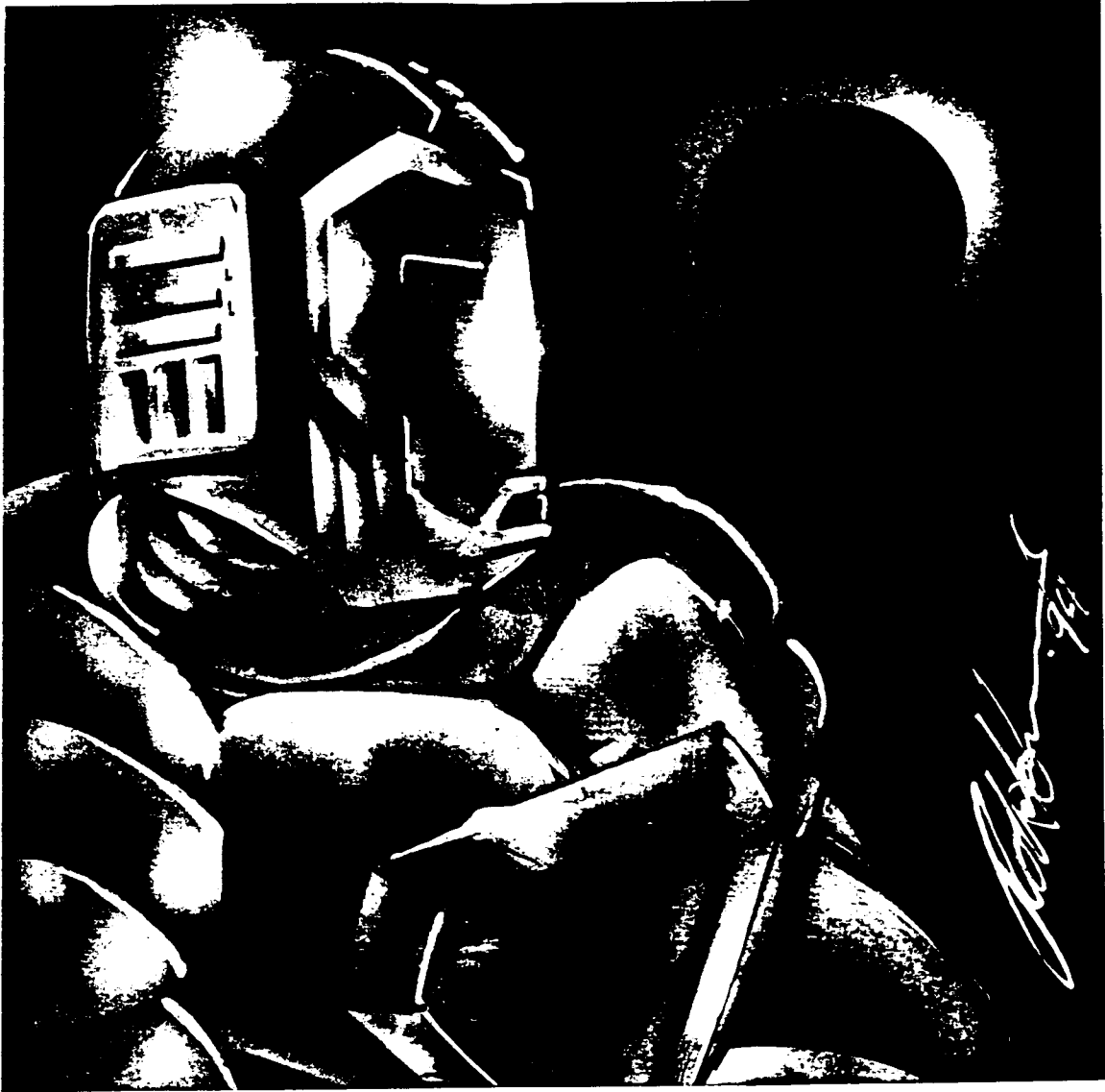
WHAT IF?....#63

What if War Machine had not destroyed the Living Laser? War Machine and IM (sort of) appear in this issue, which has three different endings. Dan Slott tells a good story and Manny Galan really knows how to put the polish on the armor.

ABOUT THE COVER:

This issues cover, by Jason Stephens, is a combination Memorial Day/Mothers Day tribute: Tony visits Maria Stark's grave. If you've been with us for a while, you've seen a number of Jason's illustrations. Jason is working toward a professional career in comics. His style is evolving and although he recently met with some of the pros at a local convention, he's interested in hearing from you. If you'd like to provide feedback, you can contact Jason at:

3606 NE 78th Street
Kansas City, MO 64119



Bonus Iron Man illustration by Robert Sumner

Stark Remarks

by Mike Kalibabky

Illustrations by Russ Fletcher and Robert Sumner

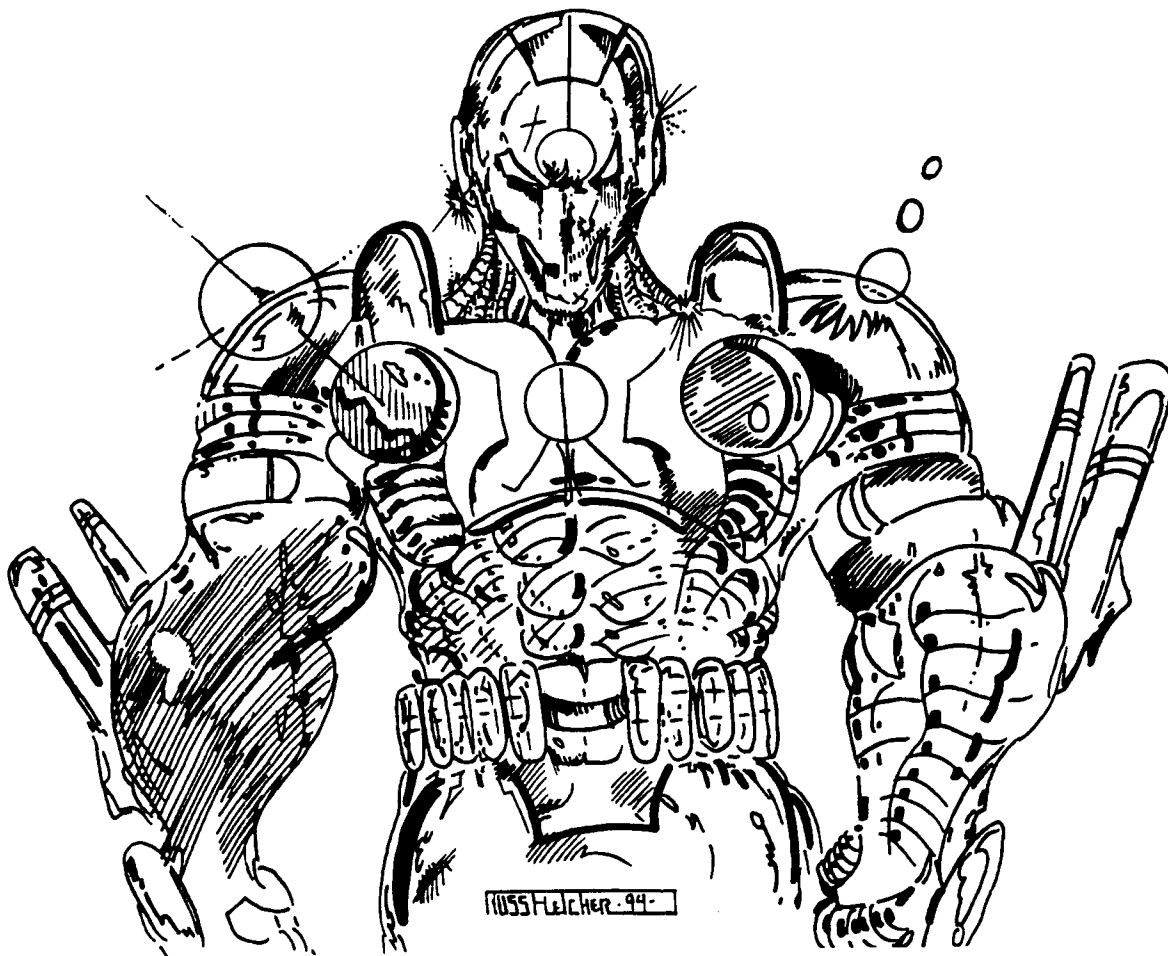
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"I'm sorry, but I just can't see this faceless, clanking wan-nabe Iron Man replacing Goth-am's Dark Knight detective."—Steven Robinson commenting on his pick—Batman—for The Worst New Costume of 1993 Award. (Comic Shop News #351)

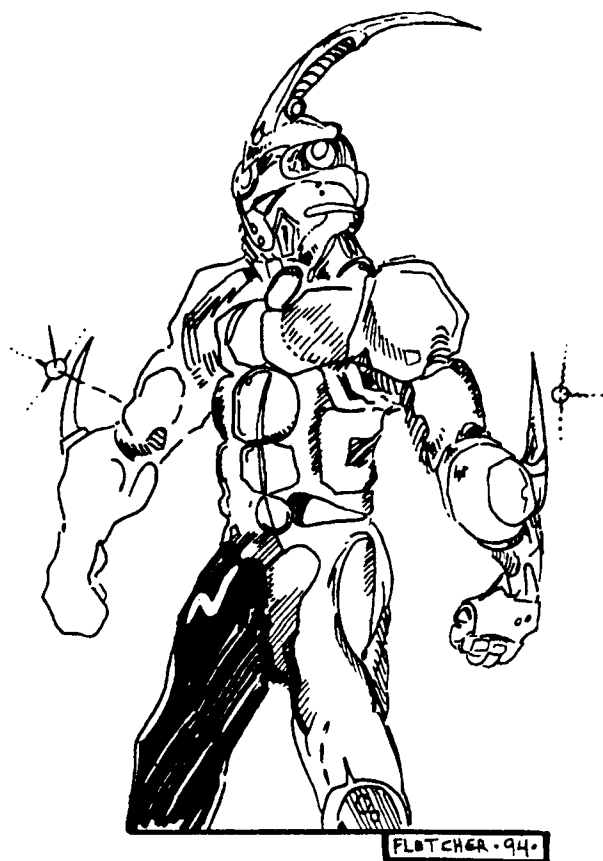
Mug Shot

Incredible. I just saw a color photograph of Len Kaminski. No, I wasn't in the post office. The photograph was in

Wizard #33, in the section that defines the comic creators' initials and names for the price guide. They spelled his name incorrectly, "Kaminsky," under the photo, but they got it right,



"Kaminski," in the initials/name section. The only thing worse is if



people start calling Len by the revered nickname of "Rusty" (he has red hair). Thanks, ~~Wizard~~ Wizard!

K.L.O.W.N.ing Around

On the flip side of *Simpsons Comics* #3 is a take-off on Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., called Krusty, Agent of K.L.O.W.N. Great stuff in the tradition of Jim Steranko. Meanwhile, I thought the new *Fury* #1 was a motherlode of revelations during the early days of Shield. Lots of Tony Stark involvement—because Stark created SHIELD in the first place! *Fury* #1 brought back a lot of memories (even though *Hero* just declared *Strange Tales*

#135, containing the origin of Shield, one of "The Doofiest Books of All!").

The Armorines,

Valiant's new book featuring four U.S. Marines clad in X-O Manowar-like armor, is a *Challengers of the Unknown* meets *The Atomic Knights* (remember them from forever ago?). Finally, a new comic with *real* adventure potential. If I'm not



mistaken, the *Armorines* are a product of Bob Layton. Well done, Mr. L.

And Speaking of Bob Layton...

In my last SR column I commented on why Layton quit *Iron Man* and why—according to him—he was not allowed to take *Iron Man* where he

thought the character should be taken, and how there was too much character history (and Marvel management) to contend with. I don't know where he gets all of this..., but Len Kaminski has been taking Iron Man and the *spin-off* character WAR Machine all over the place. Plus, he's added some new characters, such as H.O.M.E.R.; new tech concepts, i.e., The Armory and his new modular and "HULK" armors; and not to mention the new spin on Tony Stark's medical problem, the microchip implant (which I hope will go haywire soon to add to Mr. Stark's problems!). But to be fair to Mr. Layton, maybe Marvel has loosened up, i.e., they are nice people now, since Bob's stint on the book.



Toon Tech

I hope the concepts on the new Iron Man cartoon are up to speed with those in the Batman animated series.

New Bat Cards

I just picked up two packs of the new Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight trading cards produced by DC and Skybox. What a joke—the set is nothing more than reprinted panels from the comics made into cards. Y-a-w-n. Silly me to think the cards were going to be something special!

I think DC should do a trade paperback of stories or a trading card subset on the

various Batmobiles shown over the years.

Bitching Pays!

In my last SR column I grumbled about the toy market's lack of Iron Man figurines, but low and behold in the latest "Kaminski's Korner" was mention of an Iron Man toy line to be released upon the Iron Man animated series due to air this fall! (And if the promo illo—from an animation cell?—printed in a recent *Hero* magazine is any indication of the quality and coolness of the look of this series—they even got the color scheme of the new Iron Man armor correct—, we viewers are in for a big jolt of excitement!)

Head Shots

Why, why, why doesn't Iron Man have a weapon of some sort built into his helmet so he can just move his head and fire the weapon via thought or voice command without having to move his hands and arms to fire repulsors? It don't make sense to me! Comments?

Bitching Pays II!

Not long ago I complained about how inconsistent the color scheme of Iron Man's faceplate, helmet, and neckpiece were. Well, as of *Iron Man #304* it's *fixed!* Dig it: a red neckpiece, an orange border around the yellow (gold) faceplate, and a solid red helmet without stupid yellow (gold) or orange lines along the top. But, oh boy, I see in

the *Force Works* promos that those yellow helmet lines are still there. But then again, promos aren't always colored properly to begin with. I'll be watching.

Spook Stuff

Ghost Rider 2099 is another fine piece of work by Len Kaminski. I'm anxious to see how he continues to meld hi-tech with the occult (which, in a way, IS a form of technology... isn't it?). But to me personally, **I feel that Len's best writing was done on the supernatural books *Doctor Strange*, *Morbius*, and, especially, *Hellstorm***, which made me *very* nervous.

By the way, beginning with *GR2099* #4, Len will be reunited with *Hellstorm* artist Peter Gross who is originally from Duluth, Minnesota, which is about 72 miles from me. Peter currently resides somewhere in the Twin Cities area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. In addition to his own creation, *Empire Lanes* (which was supposed to have been picked up by DC), Peter has penciled issues of *Mister Miracle* and *Dr. Fate* before working on *Hellstorm* and now *Ghost Rider 2099*.

Lewie's Modern Life

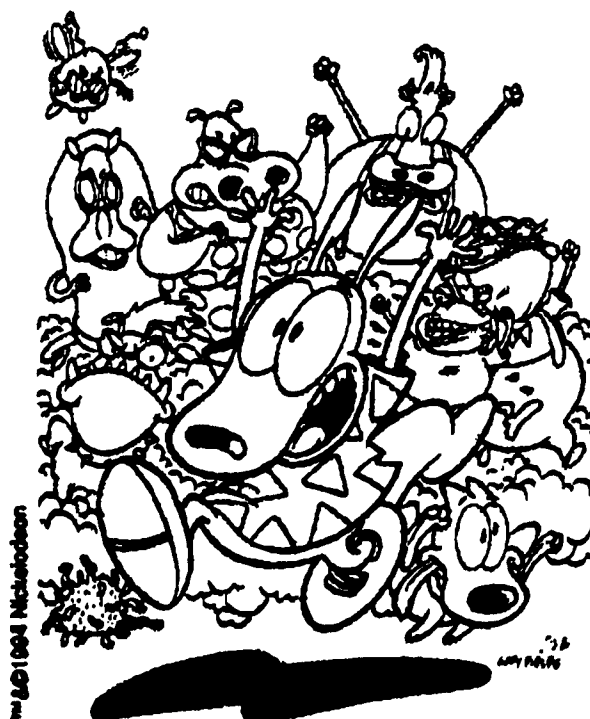
Former *Iron Man* Assistant Editor, John Lewandowski is the scribe on the new Marvel adaptation of Nickelodeon's *Rocko's Modern Life*. If you're at all a fan of the Rocko toon, check out Lewie's hilariously faithful adaptation each and every month!

A Call to Armor

The following is a list of my favorite comics that feature armored folk. My picks, from most favorite to least favorite, are based upon overall entertainment value... in my opinion:

1. *Iron Man* (Marvel)
2. *Armorines* (Valiant)
3. *WAR Machine* (Marvel)
4. *StormWatch* (Image/Wildstorm)
5. *Bio-Booster Armor Guyver* (Viz)
6. *Hardware* (Milestone)
7. *Steel* (DC)
8. *Prototype* (Ultraverse/Malibu)
9. Bat books w/new Batman (DC)

And now to follow up on just who is currently **the most popular armored black hero**, I looked into the top comics ordered for April 1994 from Capital City and Diamond. The list denotes a title's rank and issue number. So, the books



in order by vendor are:

Capital City

(total comics listed: 596)

- 037 - *StormWatch* #9 (Image)
- 061 - *Steel* #5 (DC)
- 069 - *WAR Machine* #3 (Marvel)
- 081 - *Armorines* #2 (Valiant)
- 198 - *Night Thrasher* #11 (Marvel)
- 240 - *Hardware* #16 (Milestone)

And just to compare with the overall:

- 047 - *Ghost Rider 2099* #2 (Marvel)
- 078 - *Force Works* #4 (Marvel)
- 079 - *X-O Manowar* #30 (Valiant)
- 083 - *Iron Man* #305 (Marvel)
- 172 - *Prototype* #9 (Malibu/Ultraverse)
- 230 - *Marvel Age* #137 (Marvel)
- 312 - *Guyver* #7 (Viz)

Diamond

(total comics listed: 100)

- 031 - *StormWatch* #9 (Image)
- 058 - *Steel* #5 (DC)
- 077 - *Armorines* #2 (Valiant)
- 085 - *WAR Machine* #3 (Marvel)

And just to compare with the overall:

- 044 - *Ghost Rider 2099* #2 (Marvel)
- 074 - *X-O Manowar* #30 (Valiant)
- 086 - *Force Works* #4 (Marvel)
- 089 - *Iron Man* #305 (Marvel)

In conclusion, it appears that Image's **Battalion** of StormWatch is the most popular armored black hero (or a just an armored black hero in a popular team book), followed by DC's **Steel**.

Questions for Kaminski; Or, 10 for Len

- ❶ Is there an Iron Man or WAR Machine video game for Super NES or Sega Genesis in the works or at least on the drawing board?
- ❷ Do you keep tabs on the goings-on of other armored heroes produced by the competition? And do you ever check comic book distributor sales stats to see how the books you write stack up to all the competition out there?
- ❸ I was happy—yes, happy—to see the WAR Machine armor's weapons systems sustain considerable damage in *WAR Machine* #3. So does this mean that the armor will be receiving a major re-fit in the new future, and, if so, what will it consist of?
- ❹ What other Iron Man related projects do you and Scott Benson have cooked up? Please tell us a little about Scott as a cohort and co-writer.
- ❺ What's this about an Iron Man graphic novel you mentioned in your column in *Advanced Iron* #4? Was the *Werewolf by Night* limited series you were working on ever published?
- ❻ How much time do you spend researching a book or series before you begin writing it? For example, before you began writing *Iron Man*, how long did you research the book's background and what did you use for resource materials? And to take the question one step further, what how did you create the new Ghost Rider 2099 character and book concept with an established 2099 Universe?
- ❼ How about a Kaminski roster of books you've worked on? Here, I'll lead it off: *Iron Man*, *WAR Machine*, *Morbius*, *Hellstorm*, *Dr. Strange*, *Slapstick* (a character you and Jim Fry III

co-created), DC's *Showcase '94* #6 (an Atom story), *She-Hulk*, *Ghost Rider 2099*, *Werewolf by Night* (see #5 above), *What If?* #'s 55-56 (The Avengers Lose Operation: Galactic Storm), recent issues of *Marvel Comics Presents* (a WAR Machine series), *Namor* #41 (with WAR Machine), and, finally, the 25-page story "Molecular Psychology" that appeared in the recently released *FF Annual* #27.

⑥ Why, in your opinion, doesn't Marvel list the names of a comic's creative team on the book's cover, a la DC?

⑦ Will H.O.M.E.R. ever get an issue of *Iron Man* devoted just to him?

⑧ How's Tom Morgan to work with and can you get us an advanced look at the Iron Man "terminator" prior to its scheduled debut in *Iron Man* #308?

Gearing Up with *Captain America and The Avengers*

So okay, I finally broke down and sprang for a Game Gear. The main reason: the release of *Cap and The Avengers* game. Yes, yes, yes, I know I already have it for Sega Genesis, but on the game box some of the game elements looked different from the Genesis version, so I decided to buy it. Sure enough, the game is somewhat different in terms of things you have to fight along the way, such as these little guys on flying sleds and floating green meteorites that shower you with radiation. But in reality—and you've probably guessed this—, how could I resist the temptation to play Iron Man anytime I want? Virtual Shellhead.

I also picked up *Bartman Meets*

Radioactive Man. It's hilarious to watch Bartman walk—it's just like watching an animation clip from *The Simpsons*. The game graphics are excellent, lightyears ahead of *Cap and The Avengers*.

So which game do I like better? All around, Bartman is more fun, interesting, and better to look at. BUT, being Iron Man is being Iron Man.

My only beef about the games, something I'm sure is common with all Game Gear software, is no capability to zip through all of the battery consuming intro screens. What a pain! I can just about wash my car in the time it takes wait for those screens to play/clear. But I guess the companies and programmers that created the games should get their due. At least they could enclose a coupon for batteries or something. Saaay, now there's an idea for Duracell!

Next: *World Series Baseball* and the attachment to make my Game Gear into a tv!

Bitching Pays III !

Now I feel like a jerk. Last time I whined about a lackluster 30th Anniversary for Iron Man and now in just a few short months he's gonna be on tv! But at least I'm a smiling, happy, anxious jerk. However, I'm confused. Does the new series start in September or October? I've seen it advertised both ways. Now I have something *new* to bitch about.

Marvel's 1993 Annual Report

It just came! *And there's a great illo of Iron Man on the cover!* The 1993 Report is in comic book form, featuring those Marvel characters starring in their own animated series—Spider-Man, the FF, and IRON MAN! The characters help explain the performance of Marvel stock and new products for 1994. Each "chapter" features a different facet of Marvel (comics, licensing, toys, etc.) as explained by a different group of characters. Different creative teams produced each chapter. For example, the Fleeer chapter, featuring Iron Man

"With laser-fast advances in technology and commerce, only an Iron Man can combat evils that are beyond the ability of government to contain. As a result, Iron Man is gaining newfound appeal..."

—Iron Man chase card text from
Marvel's 1993 Annual Report

and the FF, was written by Gary Fishman and illustrated by Paul Ryan & Danny Bulanadi.

By now, everything in the report is common knowledge via the mass market fanzines, so I won't get into it. But there is one really cool part of the book I have to mention. Part of the book's back cover is a sheet of chase

cards featuring the FF, Spidey, Wolverine, and Iron Man all done by Tom Morgan, *Iron Man's* new incoming artist! And let me tell ya, the Iron Man card is nice!

A Parting Plug for Me, Russ, an' Moonlight

If you are a fan of the classic baseball film *Field of Dreams*, you might like this. There is a character in the movie called Doc "Moonlight" Graham, who played one-half inning for the New York Giants and never got to bat..., until he hitched a ride to the Field in Iowa with Kevin Costner. Anyway, Doc Graham was a real person and most of the stuff mentioned about him in the film is *true!* Doc Graham was the school doctor for the Chisholm, Minnesota, school district for almost forty years! So in honor of Doc Graham, I produced a "rookie" baseball card of him, "Moonlight" Graham, for the 1992 Chisholm High School All Class Reunion. The black and white photo on the card front shows Graham in his 1905 N.Y. Giants uniform. It is the photo mentioned in W. P. Kinsella's novel *Shoeless Joe*.

Because the 1905 N.Y. Giants were the powerhouse of baseball that year and playing time would be nil for the non-starters, Graham left the Giants for the minor leagues and medical school. The Giants went on to win the World Series that year.

But what if Graham had stayed with the Giants? WHAT IF GRAHAM HAD PLAYED IN THE 1905 WORLD SERIES?

Artist Russ Fletcher and I wondered about this. We researched the idea and in March released a Moonlight Graham card that followed up on this "What If?" concept.

This new card was also funded and produced by the Chisholm High School All Class Reunion. All proceeds from the sales of both cards have gone into a scholarship fund in Doc Graham's name. In fact, the first scholarship will be awarded in June! To date, we have sold over 11,000 rookie cards, and collectively the two cards have raised over \$14,000.00. I personally do not receive compensation for my time and efforts. It's something I just enjoy doing.

Any baseball fans out there who are interested in the cards can order them from me. The Moonlight Graham rookie cards cost \$2.00 each, while the Graham World Series cards go for \$3.00 per card. The costs include a protective plastic card holder and postage. Please make your check out to: The Chisholm All Class Reunion. Send your order to me:

Mike Kalibabky
5325 McNiven Road
Chisholm, MN 55719

Thanks a lot.

And While We're All Anxiously Awaiting

the new Iron Man animated series coming this fall, you can enjoy Shellhead's earlier celluloid adventures on videotape! First, kick back and feast upon two volumes (so far) of the dreadful/hilarious/nostalgic "limited

animation" *Iron Man* toons of the 1960's, consisting of actual panels from the pages of *Tales of Suspense*. Then watch Spidey, Ice Man, and Firestorm team up to protect Tony Stark and Stark International—Iron Man, who is on a mission in space, appears briefly—from the ravages of the Beetle in the first episode of the 1981 *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends*. All three tapes, produced by Marvel Video, retail for \$9.99. If you're lucky you can rent 'em..., but what true-blue Iron Man fan wouldn't want to *own* them? One final note: the narrator of the Spidey video is also the narrator for the new Iron Man series—Stan Lee!

May 9, 1994
Chisholm, Minnesota

Illustrations

(in order of appearance):

"Brass" by Russ Fletcher
"Battle-Ready Guyver" by Russ Fletcher
"Jim Rhodes" by Robert Sumner
"Shellhead" by Robert Sumner
"Rocko's Modern Life" by Gary Fields

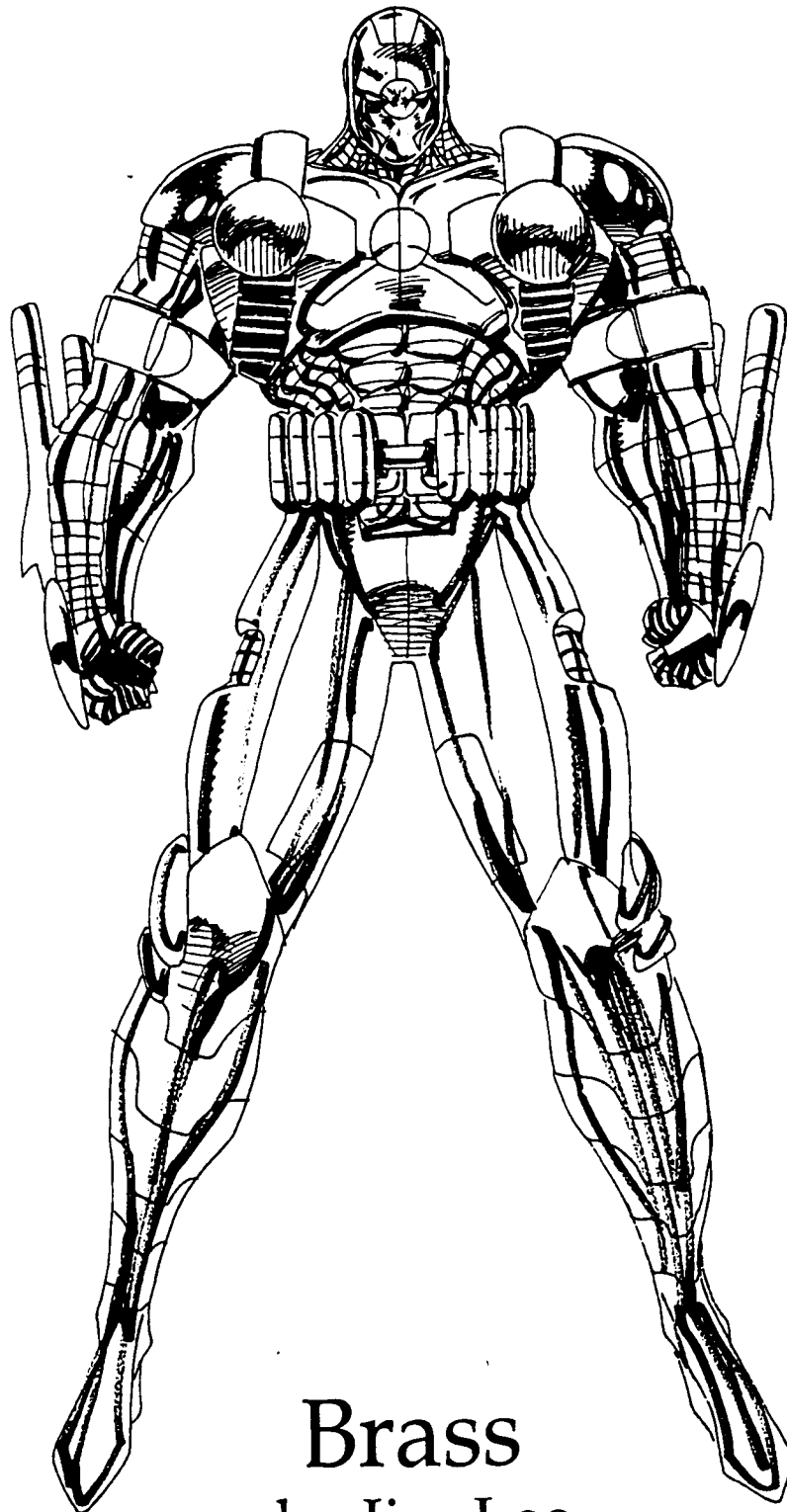
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Iron Man and *James Rhodes* are TM and ©
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The Guyver
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TM Viz Communications Inc.

Rocko's Modern Life
TM and © Nickelodeon, 1994.

**So long, Kev and Steve.
Thanks a ton.**



Brass
by Jim Lee

Introducing BRASS!

Stark Remarks - Extra

by Mike Kalibabky

Artwork by Jim Lee, Ryan Benjamin, and Alex Garner
Special Thanks to Wildstorm Editor Jeff Mariotte

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From Snowstorm to Wildstorm!

It was awful. And sickening. The worst snowstorm since 1978 had hit New York City... the day before I was to attend the 1994 NYC Comic Book Spectacular...

I had made my travel arrangements to New York months in advance—I even got great breaks on airfare and hotel accommodations. Things appeared to be shaping up nicely.

It was to be a fanboy's mecca. All the big names in the comics industry would be there. And best of all: the entire *Iron Man* creative team was coming! This, of course, was my main reason (okay, I can't lie—the *only* reason) for attending. I spent hours preparing questions to ask, comics to be signed, and copies of *Iron Fan* and *Advanced Iron* to be handed out to reps from other comic companies that had an armored hero or two in their

stables. I had hoped to draw a little attention to our 'zines and thought perhaps several of Marvel's rivals might spice up our publication with a little up and coming info on their particular metal-clad maniacs. One of my favorite pastimes, and self-appointed jobs, is to compare Iron Man with the competition.

Well, sir, the snow flew but my plane didn't. I was forced to miss the New York shindig and I felt bad about it.

However, my plan to contact the companies of other armored characters was not to go unrealized. I sent out copies of *IF* and *AI* and hoped for the best. I wrote to Valiant (*X-O Manowar*), DC (*Steel*), Milestone (*Hardware*), Ultraverse/Malibu (*Prototype*) and Image (*Storm Watch-Battalion*).

Now I already knew from Bill Egan that Valiant was not interested.



Brass by Ryan Benjamin and Alex Garner

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Bill previously had been turned down cold at a con by Bob Layton. I also knew from a friend that DC is not particularly supportive of people who produce fanzines. But I felt that I had three solid possibilities...

I waited.

And then a letter arrived. It was from **Wildstorm Productions**—Jim Lee's company! **Jeff Mariotte**, an editor on *StormWatch*, was writing on behalf of Wildstorm, *StormWatch*, and a new armored character called **Brass**! Included in this SR-Extra is an early full-bodied **Jim Lee** rendering of Brass and a sizzling Brass action page by **Ryan Benjamin** and **Alex Garner**!

Jeff writes: "We're happy to help you [*Iron Fan*] as much as we can... The first issue [of *Brass*] is still in progress, so I can't say a whole lot about it, because it's still taking shape. The basic thrust of the story is that Brass is a young man who has become infected with a sentient virus that oozes out through his pores, creating armor. Also, it carries memories of other victims of the virus, which complicates his life further. The book is being plotted and drawn by **Richard Bennett**... The armor has changed significantly already, and between these two versions and the current one, it has changed even more..."

Jeff could not comment on the upcoming goings-on with Battalion, *StormWatch*'s heavily armed and heavily armored leader, but he did relay the following: "There's not much I can say right now about Battalion without giving away too much from our *StormWatch* #25 storyline. You may have seen the ads, in which it is revealed that Battalion is dead in issue #25. I can say that not only is he dead, but he's in for the fight of his life."



I sincerely wish to thank Jeff Mariotte and Wildstorm Productions for allowing *Iron Fan* this exclusive first look at Brass, their exciting new armored character, and a hint of things to come for *StormWatch* and Battalion. I appreciate the effort Jeff has made to find time in his grueling schedule to supply me with these interesting facts and powerful illustrations from the creative minds at Wildstorm.

The first issue of *Brass* is due out sometime this summer. Look for *StormWatch* #25 in June.

April 18, 1994
Chisholm, Minnesota

THINGS TO COME

Most of this preview information comes from True Believer, which should be available from your local comic shop.

FORCE WORKS #4 (ships 2 August)

by Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning/ Tom Tenney/ Rey Garcia

This is the first of a two part story in which the Force Works team is thrown into the middle of a civil war on the border of the Scarlet Witch's homeland of Transia. Not only do they have to try and calm down the locals but they must also face the wrath of the warring parties' two mythical protectors:

The Black Brigade
and Ember ----->



WAR MACHINE #7 (ships 9 August)

by Len Kaminski / Gabe Gecka/ Pam Ecklund

Hawkeye guest stars when the Cold Warrior threatens to put War Machine on ice, permanently. Plus more on War Machine's relationship with his ex-employer: Anthony Stark. My guess is that we'll be seeing Rhodey hitting Tony up for the plans and/or repairs for the War Machine armor.

IRON MAN #309 (ships 30 August)

by Len Kaminski / Tom Morgan

Tony Stark vs. Iron Man!? This is part two of Stark's battle with the artificial intelligence called Vortex. It seems that Vortex has taken control of Stark's own body, so Tony decides to fight his own body by mentally controlling a "Terminator-like" robot. How can he win this battle against himself? Check out #309 and find out.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS (ships 30 August)

by Nel Yomtov/John Czap/Tim Dzon

Part 1 of a 3 part story that looks at how Spider-Woman deals with the affect that Force Works may have on the life of her daughter. Note that Nel is doing the writing for this one.

Next Month: More Advanced Iron from other universes and a preview of Iron Fan #5